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prohibitively expensive. The pathetic sight was common at the time of an old woman trudging back from a long tramp into the Vienna woods with sticks under her arm and a rucksack full of twigs on her back. The load would at most provide a little heat for a few hours, and the extremity of the need was proved by the lengths to which people would go to produce such small results.

Vienna is a cold city in winter. There is no doubt that the combined effect of unheated houses and inadequate food was responsible for the death of many old and ailing people. It was also partly responsible for the very high suicide rate. In 1946 there were 933 suicides or attempted suicides in Vienna alone.

The figures given regarding the food supply have referred to food coming from official sources. In Austria after the War there was an extensive black market in food, fuel, and a large number of luxuries. It was the time now often described by Austrians as the period of 'The Third Man', after the well-known film with its unflattering portrayal of Viennese conditions. The rationing system was unreliable as well as inadequate. People were justifiably sceptical as to whether they would actually receive the quotas that had been officially announced. In these circumstances it was understandable that they should turn to the black market as an alternative source.

In August 1945, when the shortage was at its worst, black-market food prices in Vienna were about 264 times as high as the official rates. The exorbitant prices reflect the intensity of the need. And there is no doubt that there were many who paid them. Otherwise the health of the people would have suffered much more than it did. There were very few rich. But the majority of the working population had been able to save during the War, when most articles were scarce. Many members of the impoverished aristocracy and middle class parted with their valuables to avoid starvation.

There was a considerable difference between the black market in Austria and that in England. In England rations were

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sufficient, the black market was in luxuries, and the people, on the whole, were law-abiding. The problem therefore was primarily one for the police. In Austria rations were insufficient, the black market was in necessities as well as luxuries, and the consciences of the people were attuned to God and reason rather than to the law. The problem was thus rather a matter of economics, and in any case the Austrian police force was inexperienced and under strength.

The existence of the black market and the widespread use that was made of it were obstacles to the improvement of the food situation as a whole. The fact that foodstuffs were being sold at such extravagantly different prices made the farmers reluctant to increase their official deliveries. The black-market rates were excessive, but the official rates were beneath world levels and unfairly low for the producer. In spite of the efforts of the authorities, which included the threat of imprisonment, the farmers did little to help. Some of them dealt on the black market, and others found it more profitable to feed grain to their animals than sell it at the official price. During the difficult spring of 1946, the meat deliveries from the provinces to Vienna fell 90 to 100 per cent short of the allocations.

If the attitude of the farmers was neither helpful nor patriotic, it was the ineffectiveness of the whole system that was chiefly to blame. In these circumstances the Austrian Government's own measures to deal with the food problem were slow to show results.

There were two further reasons why the shortage persisted. Additional food supplies were required from abroad. But Austria's traditional sources of supply had been Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia, and immediately after the War these countries were not in a position to export foodstuffs. Hungary and Poland later fell increasingly under Russian economic influence. Secondly, Austria had not the resources with which to pay for imports. In terms of exports grain now cost nearly twice as much as before the War, and such foreign exchange as was earned was required to buy raw materials and equipment for industry. A vicious circle was in operation: exports